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ABSTRACT

A series of discussions among members of the language departments at SUNY/Buffalo was held to examine ways of improving language teaching methodology in the college, particularly at the second-year level. The suggestions resulting from these meetings are offered as a practical response to the decreased enrollment in language courses. The suggestions cover the following topics: (1) changing trends in education, which enable the instructor to have a pluralistic approach to teaching, diversifying techniques to suit individual needs; (2) alternatives to textbook teaching for second-year language students; (3) small groups for the language classroom; (4) integration of visual media at the second-year level of language instruction, including cinema, shorts, and commercials in foreign languages; (5) mini-courses, an option for third-year students, as a means of arranging course content according to the students' interests and abilities; (6) use of advanced students as teaching aides in second-year language courses; (7) orientation and training of new teaching assistants; (8) the use of foreign language houses in which students of all levels could experience "total immersion" in the foreign culture; and (9) alternative careers for language students including a modified curriculum with career orientation. (LG)

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ALTERNATIVES IN THE SECOND-YEAR LANGUAGE COURSES:

A REPORT FOR THE

DEPARTMENTS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

AT

SUNY/BUFFALO

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The above essays were prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Teaching of Modern Languages. The members of this Committee are: Jeff Kline (Chairman), Peter Boyd-Bowman, Natalie Chilton, Michael Metzger, Anthony Papalia, and Maria Carlota Baca.

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ALTERNATIVES IN THE SECOND-YEAR LANGUAGE COURSES

I. INTRODUCTION:

In our efforts to obtain the best results in foreign-language teaching, we cannot blindly follow one method of instruction and become indifferent to the sensitivities of the students. It would be a mistake to consider one teaching method as the only or even the most important variable in foreign-language learning. Results of research comparing the effectiveness of various teaching methods have generally proved indecisive.

This report represents the written outcome of a series of discussions among members of the departments of French; Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese; Germanic and Slavic; and Instruction. Each of us had a special area of experience and interest. Thus, the present series of suggestions constitutes a reasonably representative collection, and, we hope, a practical response to the fact that interest and enrollment in language courses have decreased.

At the outset, we identified second-year language courses as our major target area, since these have long presented the greatest problems to the language teacher and, consequently, this level suffers most in terms of declining student morale and enrollment.

The authors were, nonetheless, quite concerned with what chronologically precedes and follows this problem year. We felt, for example, that some of our suggestions were so thoroughly applicable to both first and second year that mention of both

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sequences seemed imperative. Likewise, in a few instances, some comments about techniques of first-year language courses seemed so essential to the foundations of later course sequences that they could not be eliminated. Finally, we were unable to consider beginning language courses without realizing that career motivation played a large role in morale and enrollment. Thus, a series of suggestions for alternative careers concludes this monograph.

Our suggestions include proposals for curriculum, options to the traditional text, use of media, individualized instruction, use of advanced undergraduates, proposals for mini-courses in the third year, recommendations on the training of Teaching Assistants, and some thoughts on language houses. We considered, among various possibilities, self-instructional programs, but we determined that such programs were not applicable to large numbers of students. For further information on self-instruction techniques, we refer you to Self-Instructional Language Programs, A Handbook for Faculty and Students (SUNY State Education Department). Nor did we decide to include innovative projects already underway in various language departments on this campus, notably, the pilot project for team-teaching in Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese.

We hope you will find these essays provocative and that they will serve to renovate and revitalize language study at SUNY/B and elsewhere.

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II. CHANGING TRENDS IN FOREIGN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION:

Foreign-language instruction seems to be characterized by an either/or approach, i.e., either "progressive" or "traditional," student-centered or subject-centered, life adjustment or academic excellence. Foreign language instructors and curriculum developers act as if there were three models of educational change:

In the first model foreign-language education is moving down a long road, and the practices and techniques once considered adequate are passed, one by one, and left behind forever. As they fall behind, they become "traditional ways." The new ones which are in sight become progressive, modern, or right ways. There is a continuous movement from the traditional practices left behind to the progressive ones being approached. Presently, there is a movement·

From	To
Curriculum based on subject matter	Curriculum based on student interest, experience, leading to new purposes and insights
Content values of curriculum	Process values of curriculum
Dictated, prescribed, and controlled learning	Self-planning and self-direction, freedom to discover, explore, and think
Question-answer recitation	Students taking initiative, group discussions, conferences, conversation on common interests
Teacher as a general practitioner	Teacher as a clinical specialist
Teaching as telling	Teaching as guiding

The second way of picturing educational change is to compare it with a pendulum swinging back and forth in the same path. Opinions may shift away from a given method and back again to the same original position.

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The third way of viewing change in foreign-language education is to think of an ascending spiral which enlarges as it climbs. In common with the pendulum, this view allows renewed attention to a problem. The difference in the spiral view is that it accounts for the supposition that proposals made at a later point are in some way more refined with wisdom gained from past experiences.

It seems that educational thought moves in some sort of pattern. Gaining understanding of the pattern may help the individual instructor to analyze his particular stance on curriculum development.

In implementing a course of study, the instructor must be aware of many methods and techniques of instruction and use them according to the objectives, the needs, the characteristics, and the learning styles of the students.

Just as we are living in a pluralistic society, people with many backgrounds and goals, we have a pluralistic approach to learning--diverse techniques to suit individual needs and to meet different curricular and instructional goals.

The instructor may begin with what the student wants to learn or with what interests him. From there he guides the pupil into many other aspects of the foreign language and its culture. In this way, he will contribute to the student's growth and will bring about positive changes in his attitudes, his way of thinking, his knowledge, and his skills.

The structuring of curricula requires planners to respond to such questions as: what to teach? (content); to whom? (nature of students--age level, range of ability, and student readiness); why? (purpose); with what? (materials); how to teach? (procedural

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steps, instructional techniques, and activities); when? (internal sequencing of course); where? (setting); and finally, how to evaluate and improve learning.

The pages to follow will describe several possible ways of organizing the subject matter and some techniques which may be used in foreign-language instruction.

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III. PERSONALIZED INSTRUCTION: AN OPTION TO THE TRADITIONAL TEXTBOOK FOR SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS:

The second year of language study is a critical period for the student who has just finished absorbing the first year's rudiments of grammar and a minimal working vocabulary. Because the rules and patterns have been learned so methodically and accumulatively, the student has witnessed tangible results on an almost weekly basis in the first year course. The second year, to the contrary, lends itself to learning all the exceptions to all those grammar rules and, therefore, the application of each learning session is more isolated and limited. As a result, the student risks stalemating on a plateau he has reached, and consequently may lose his enthusiasm for language pursuit. The second year course may be likened to a suspension foot bridge which bears its shakey pedestrian from the first year footing on solid land to the firm footing on the other side of language acquisition. Therefore, the imperative of a safe crossing is unquestionable.

How can the instructor stabilize the student's footing and keep him moving forward in a steady direction? He/she must go beyond the traditional textbook of grammar review and readings in literature. The instructor must realize that the text is a guide, a supplement to the teacher, not vice-versa. Fortunately, the foreign language instructor is dealing with a very adaptable subject matter: language. It creeps into every experience of every day of life,--silently, joltingly, calmly, passively, raucously--whatever the moment may entail. It is our major means of expression both professionally and socially, whether in conversation or through the printed page. Above all, language is, and must be, our

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friend and constant companion--exciting, alive, and ever-changing. If language pervades our existence to such an extent, the people who sit in a language class bring with them a wealth of language expression potential through their individual experiences in the daily round of a dizzying world. This reservoir of personal activity must be tapped for the scope of oral exchange in a classroom given over to the problem of personal language mastery.

There are several possible methods for incorporating the expression of personal experience into the foreign language classroom. It can be handled either from a subjective or an objective point of departure. Initially, the instructor must gather information about his/her students. Probably the most efficient method for doing so is to assign a written paper on a subject chosen by the student. With this freedom to select one's own topic, the student almost invariably writes about something of personal interest to him. After two or three themes apiece, the instructor has a veritable storehouse of data on his students--both from the topics chosen and from the manner of expression. Themes from the first week of class can feasibly generate the entire semester's program of study. Grammar problems that prevail in the themes are the indicators of trouble areas and should be dealt with as they come up. Written work is doubly efficient for it contains not only the effort to express something, but also the visual reinforcement gained in the act of writing the word down. The instructor would do well to correct written work in the following manner at the second-year level: Underline in contrasting color the mistakes in the theme without explaining the problem and let the student determine his own error. Afterward, the instructor

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quickly checks the accuracy of the student's own corrections. If the problem is not resolved on its own, the instructor then offers explanations. This is another way of reinforcing with a single assignment several aspects of the learning process. It is a way of encouraging more active participation and exchange as opposed to the traditional "teaching as telling." The instructor guides and mediates; he does not dictate with an emphatic red pencil.

When specific areas of grammar need special attention, the instructor can select a creative topic which necessarily incorporates such grammatical expression automatically. For example, if the subjunctive, in Italian, is unclear to the student, request a theme which begins: "If I were a _____," or "If I had _____." The students' imagination can fly free. Since the point of departure is hypothetical, they will necessarily express themselves in the subjunctive and the conditional, but that is an indirect result. The point of the composition is the student's discovery of how unexpectedly original he can be with a fragmentary opening sentence. One class which employed the above idea ranged from an imaginary life as an omnipotent wizard to that of an earthworm.

Another thematic idea for written work is an opening paragraph which sets a tone, but gives no details. For example: "_____had walked for half and hour before (he/she) came to the address acquired at the price of (his/her) personal tranquility. But is was too late to back out now. (He/she) looked about to discover the eyes (he/she) felt upon (his/her) back. But to no avail. Taking a deep breath, (he/she) placed (his/her) hand upon the doorknob." The results of a class who used this idea included

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everything from a small child's first visit to a dentist, to the makings of a murder mystery. Such a theme could give exercise to the use of the historical past tense, with the imperfect tense used for states of mind and emotion.

Everyone knows some fairy tales. Asking a student to re-interpret an original fable, legend or fairy tale can bring highly amusing results. One student, for example, re-told the "Sleeping Beauty" with a modern twist at the end. The heroine, when she wakes up to her lover's kiss, feels compelled to confess that she is the first women's liberationist--much to the chagrin of the Prince.

These ideas for themes are in no way esoteric. They must necessarily utilize the vocabulary of every day speech. They involve emotions and situations which are common to all. Only the context removes them in time from our daily experiences. Furthermore, the element of humor can reach almost everyone including the inhibited student. If he balks at such tasks, remove the complexity of the assignment to the translation of a four-line joke or a cartoon. Classroom humor is infectious. A fringe benefit is to then use the students' themes for their oral presentation in class where all can share the originality of the ideas.

In principle, conversation class topics should also be student determined. Give the students notice that they should come armed with suggestions. When several topics are gathered, hold a vote and let the majority rule which ideas they wish to pursue. Normally, the suggestions involve current affairs, both local and international, such as Watergate, UFO's and the University grading system. These issues may well be more pertinent to

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a second year class then discussing an excerpt from eighteenth-century literature. And no text could possibly be so up to date. Newspapers and magazines may be more useful. A weekly such as Rome's Expresso or its equivalent in other countries could kindle conversation on cultural topics pertinent to the country of the foreign language.

If the students need the security of a textbook to feel tangible accomplishment, bring excerpts from existing texts for the class to sample. After perusing these fragments the students may then decide which book is most appealing according to their needs and preferences. This approach which increases student determination of class content does not remove authority from the instructor. No one text is perfect and no two classes hold exactly similar student needs. The instructor is aware of many possible texts. With his professional preparation, he selects the most useful ones. Only at that point do the students make the choice of material--and so with the oral and written work in the class.

A second year language class must be so organized that it inspires the students to continue their language pursuit. This is best accomplished when the class accomodates the individualities of the students therein. Language, which is the subject of the lessons, is fundamentally creative in nature. This automatically allows a personal approach for a dynamic classroom experience based on self-exploration through the above mentioned suggestions for creative expression. It can change the drudgery of pre-determined work assignments into a game of the unexpected discovery. A game, if it is well played, is a challenge and an accomplishment.

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The shift which focuses on individual students, and personal skills, if accepted as a viable method of classroom procedure, could greatly minimize two chronic problems of language instruction at the second-year level: 1) proficiency articulation and 2) student retention.

1) The integration of students who have had their first year of language instruction at the university level with those of different kinds of high-school language background, would be eased considerably by a combination of individualized and self-instructional approaches, thus alleviating the demoralization of less well-prepared students who feel that they are in an unfair "competitive" situation on one hand, and of students who feel "held back" in unnecessary grammar review, etc., on the other, both of these being groups among which second-year attrition is traditionally high. Well-defined goals for language skills should be established which students can achieve at their own rates, leaving the students who achieve them more quickly the time to pursue reading or media interests commensurate with their mastery of the language, their freedom to do so being made clearly dependent by the instructor on the degree of their mastery. A certain amount of leeway should also be given students for deciding to which of the "four skills" each would give priority.

2) The method of curricular "lock-step" at the second-year level does nothing less than intrude upon the single student's possible retention due to differing proficiency among his classmates. This problem becomes acute due to the differing interests of the students which are rarely reconcilable by the common denominator of literature or "cultural" studies. The importance of allowing

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each student or small "teams" of interest groups to play their own "games" becomes emphatic in this light. By dividing the class into individualized or small group efforts, the instructor could encourage and reinforce student-to-student exchange based on personal preparation through such resources as AV-media and library materials. There is minimal or no dependence on pre-packaged texts. Whereas one might ultimately criticize the metaphor of "game" as a classroom procedure because it can so easily generate deadly competition among the players, it is to be born in mind that here the idea is one of individual games. Each student competes with himself. At times during the semester, a kind of "buddy system" could be used, in which the more proficient students help the less advanced, thus deepening their own command of the language. For such classroom "games," the only common rules are those of progress and excellence of execution.

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IV. SMALL GROUPS IN THE CLASSROOM:

Success and continuance in the study of a language depends for the most part on what the teacher is and does in the classroom and the learner must see a purpose for learning. Therfore, in our quest for developing better language programs, let us not ignore the human factor. Let us reach our students as human beings first, then satisfy their intellectual and practical needs.

It is assumed that teaching is a process which involves interaction, communication, personal contact and a deep understanding of the student, who is a unique human being with a unique combination of interests, achievement level and learning styles. Furthermore, it is assumed that the amount of time a student needs to learn a given task varies from individual to individual.

In order to provide a base of operation which would promote the ability to interact, to personalize instruction, and to develop in the students favorable attitudes toward foreign language study, the instructor may use small group instruction in the classroom. Group processes provide an understanding of how groups interact while making the instructor aware that within the classroom there are individuals, each with his own psychological makeup, his own problems, his own needs, and anxieties.

Groups do not develop because the teacher says "let's work in groups," but they are the result of careful planning. The following communication exercises may enhance group work:

1) Pairing

This is used to develop listening and an ability to change direct into indirect discourse. Students are at times randomly paired and are to explain to each

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other what the teacher has just presented, or what task they are to perform by paraphrasing each others' statements before making new ones in the target languages.

2) Inner-outer circle

The inner-outer circle is used to develop conversational skills, observation and listening. Five students are in the inner circle conversing on a specific topic assigned such as a French film, an article or an advertisement in an Italian magazine, or assigned readings. The other five students in the outer circle are assigned to observe selected ones of the inner circle and to mark down on a piece of paper errors of pronunciation and structure which they recognized. At the end of the conversation, the students in the inner circle pair themselves with those observing them and discuss the possible errors they had committed during the conversation practice. The instructor's role is that of providing a question sheet related to the topics, to serve as a resource person, to give feedback, to prescribe and to develop remedial work.

3) Triad, Quartets, and Quintets

Triads, quartets, and quintets are used for conversational purposes. Groups are formed either at random or selected by the instructor as per interest, remedial, and enrichment purposes. At times, there is an appointed leader. Students interact on a determined topic, while the leader uses a list of questions prepared by the instructor to keep the conversation moving. At the end

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the teacher's role is simply one of motivator; there is not the involvement or accountability in brainstorming as there is in the task group. In "brainstorming" the group membership is increased in number (ideally 12). This is important, for free-flowing ideas are what will enhance creativity and discovery. Note also the difference in brainstorming composition and activities as compared to the task group:

1) Choose a subject that is simple, familiar and talkable. Good sessions do not include written activity; the problem should not require use of paper and pen.

2) Criticism is ruled out; adverse judgments of ideas must be withheld until later.

3) "Free-wheeling" is welcomed; the wilder the idea, the better.

4) Quantity is wanted.

5) Combination and improvement of ideas are the basic goals. Group members are to contribute their own ideas, suggest amelioration of others' ideas and seek to combine two or more ideas into yet another idea.

The nature of the brainstorming group is primarily subjective and experiential.

DIDACTIC GROUP

The didactic small group has either the instructor or a student leading the group; the purpose here is informing. Unlike the task or brainstorming groups, the didactic group directly involves student and teacher on a give and take basis; direct interchange of ideas.

TUTORIAL GROUP

Still a more direct group is the tutorial; emphasis is on individualization of instruction and is usually of a remedial nature. Here, the small group is the vehicle toward reaching the individual.

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Some Small Group Activities in the Classroom

1) Working together on grammar exercises.

2) Working on auto-tutorial material such as foreign language activity packages and programs.

3) Practicing and presenting dialogues.

4) Developing conversations and rewriting conversations.

5) Performing pattern drills.

6) Reading aloud and clarifying meaning.

7) Writing a skit or play.

8) Taping a discussion and then, upon play-back, discussing errors.

9) Debating.

10) Discussion on specific cultural topics: plays, novels, movies, etc

11) Games in the target language.

12) Developing conversations on a series of visual stimuli.

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V. THE INTEGRATION OF VISUAL MEDIA AT THE SECOND-YEAR LEVEL OF LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION:

1) Justification: The reasons for decline in student morale at the second-year level are myriad; some students, when questioned, remark that demoralization sets in because of boredom, i.e., they are forced to do much the same sort of pattern drills as during their first year, except now the expectations and speed are heightened and accelerated. In other words, the repetitive aspect of their language studies is dismaying and disappointing. Other students report disappointment in that they are not yet speaking the language, as they had hoped to do by this time. This may have to do with a weak instructor, a poor pedagogical approach to oral proficiency, or a textbook which counteracts, and perhaps even undermines, oral expression. Finally, many students resent the texts themselves, in that they are often still limited to inane dialogues and readers containing literary excerpts which have but limited relation to the typical lower-division student of 1974. Exposing students too early and in such piecemeal fashion to great literature has, sometimes, the lamentable result of "turning them off" simply because they are then forced to conduct contrived discussion in a foreign tongue--on literature--indeed, fragments of literature--for which they have no background.

2) Materials: One of the possible solutions to this problem may lie in the modification of materials. This does not mean that one would throw the grammar text out the window; it means rather that other more appropriate supplementary materials could be introduced. One such innovation might well be the introduction of non-literary texts, such as magazines, newspapers,

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etc.; this has been mentioned above in this monograph. Another such innovation might be the introduction of visual media into second-year level. One can define visual media here to mean 1) cinema (i.e., foreign feature films), 2) shorts (i.e., short films on the art, music, architecture, and culture of a given country), and 3) commercials used on foreign television networks. The latter two media are apparently obtainable through the appropriate foreign consul, often at no cost whatsoever. The first media option, feature films, presumes some kind of film library in the vicinity of the institution, and this may, admittedly, require some budget outlay. The particular appeal, however, of feature films, is that many of them are "classics" not only cinematographically, but also in a literary sense, in that the screenplays have been written by recognized and revered twentieth-century authors. This is further enhanced by the fact that, more and more, such screenplays are becoming available in paperback editions (due no doubt to the rise in cinema studies and departments around the country and in Europe). Hopefully, one does not need to argue the fact that <u>films are attractive</u> to students. One must, however, take precautions that such visual material not become an end in itself. Rather, it must be regarded as a <u>tool</u> whereby one can motivate students and, at the same time, give them exposure to quality media which will, in turn, spark discussion and provoke further interest and study.

3) <u>Design</u>: Given a course of third or fourth semester language, one could schedule 4-5 films for the semester term. In addition, one would have, in the bookstore, paperback editions of the screenplays for each of the films. (If only 2 or 3 films

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are available, other media, such as shorts, would be substituted to the schedule.)

Students would initially study the screenplay, as they would any other reading text (i.e., from the points of view of translation, idiomatic expressions, etc.). They would then be required to attend a screening, subsequent to which a class session (or two) would be devoted to oral discussion sparked by the text and the film. After such discussion, they would be asked to write a composition, the subject of which could be of their own choosing as regards the work, or a topic of the instructor's bidding. The instructor could even ask the students to write an alternative screenplay for a given scene in the film. In any case, this kind of design would integrate the four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension. . . with the additional complement of <u>seeing</u>.

Admittedly, this is a very general design and would have to be coordinated with the necessary grammar study needed at this level. In addition, such a curriculum would have to be adapted to conform to the contact hours per week, the various instructors' interest and knowledge, and the student interest expressed. Nonetheless, it is an alternative to be considered at this very crucial second-year level of language study.

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VI. MINI-COURSES: AN OPTION FOR THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS:

Mini-Courses represent a way of arranging the content according to students' interests, characteristics and ability. As the name implies, it is a segment of a larger unit of time of a course and its focus is on short-term objectives, with variable credit and scheduled according to each department's needs.

The preferred time to offer mini-course options is after the second year of instruction. Two considerations support this recommendation:

1) In the first and second year of a language, students gain a basic vocabulary, a command of basic grammatical structures, and familiarity with some cultural concepts, and they have had opportunity to apply these to listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This should provide a dependable preparation for the pursuit of different avenues in the foreign language field.
2) It is at the end of the second year that the greatest degree of dropout occurs. Many discontinue their study of foreign language at this point because they think that the third year is heavily literature-oriented and not to their liking. Diversification is much needed at this juncture, and mini-courses offer a means of providing it.

During the second year of instruction, students may be surveyed to indicate which mini-courses they are interested in taking in the third year. Although the importance of relating mini-course topics to the interest of students and the backgrounds of teachers is stressed, a listing of topics that have been developed in a number

of schools may be helpful to faculties just starting out to establish such courses--and to curriculum directors and other staff members who may be involved in the venture.

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Group I: Language

Corrective Phonetics
Everyday Conversation
Vocabulary Building
Grammar Review
Reading for Fun
Reading Mysteries
Writing and Presenting Skits
Composition
Journalism
Business Language
Reading from Newspapers and Magazines

Group II: Literature

Course on a specific author
Introduction to Literature
Overview of any one century
Course on one specific work

Group III: Culture

Art
History
Music
Current Events
Political System
Role of Women
Family Life
Education
Industry
Urban Life
Rural Life
Teenage Life
Cinema, TV
Recreation and Leisure

Sorting mini-courses into categories such as the above can be helpful in examining a mini-course program for its scope; it will be rare, however, that a given course will neatly fit completely into language, literature, or culture.

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VII. PROJECT FOR USE OF ADVANCED LANGUAGE STUDENTS:

Universities with large undergraduate language programs have perennially encountered the problem of the second year let-down in language study as this study has shown. Schools which have maintained advanced language studies may have been overlooking one of their most effective pedagogical resources: their own advanced students. One of the problems in the second year of language study derives from the tendency to approach language acquisition from one, or possibly two, linguistic models which encourage students more or less mechanically to copy their linguistic patterns.

To the degree that a university builds a respectable corpus of advanced language students, (50-100 or more students), it automatically encounters a second but no less serious problem: motivation and early career training of its advanced undergraduates. (One difficulty of this career training remains, of course, the definition and real diversification of careers for language majors. Such diversified and alternative careers will be discussed in a later section. The authors of the present study have developed a parallel project in new directions for language majors to be presented separately). To the degree that the career choice of these advanced students centers on language teaching--and even if their choice is <u>not</u> teaching!--some early teaching experience is invaluable for them. We know (at SUNY/Buffalo) of the eagerness of such students for teaching opportunities from their response to the F.L.E.S. project (Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools). In its initial year here, SUNY/Buffalo students met and surpassed the demand from the local public schools for

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volunteer teacher aids in language, and they will undoubtedly continue to do so.

It is not difficult to understand this response. Language majors are given only one semester of practice teaching in a local school as part of their Teacher Certification by the state. (Those who do not enroll in the Teacher Certification Education programs get no such training.) Thus the chance to test their career choice is, at best, a limited opportunity.

Again, those not enrolled in the Teacher Certification Program may be planning graduate study in language and literature and may shortly find themselves as Teaching Assistants in front of college classes of beginning language!

Even those who do not plan to teach at all understand the benefits of such teaching. There is no better way to learn than to teach--no better way to refresh the rules of grammar than to inculcate those rules in others, no better way to sharpen phonetics than to propose one's own accent as a model.

If advanced students were asked to contribute to the teaching of the second year, they would be involved in the process most guaranteed to sharpen their understanding and command of their second language. Besides this early test of and benefit from career training, the advanced student would quickly perceive other advantages from participating in language teaching. His/her presence in the classroom as teacher would provide a perspective on his/her performance as students and would (in most cases) greatly modify that performance, making him/her more responsive to the problems of his own teachers. Such "teaching" would put increased pressure on the advanced student to perform and would

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thus increase the quality of his/her work. Those advanced students as yet unsure of their progress would be able to test their skills against those of less advanced students and appreciate their own relatively advanced status--an inducement to self-confidence. Finally, if the proper forum could be found (and we shall propose such a forum below), such experiences would provide a meaningful contact with other advanced students. Conscious of their common participation in and with problems arising from teaching, students could share their experiences, successes, and techniques. They would thus be encouraged early in their careers to develop a professional relationship involving a mutually constructive attitude--which is, as we know, the secret to successful departments. The Advanced Language Student would thus have identity and confidence in his/her peers. This increase in contact and communication could only be beneficial--not only in the addition to the student's examination of career problems but undoubtedly, too, in his chance to utilize the second language in a relaxed day-to-day contact with his/her peers.

Assuming a group of advanced students <u>were</u> available to aid in the teaching of a second-year language, what would be the advantage of utilizing such a (pedagogically) unskilled group? First, the advanced students would introduce a <u>true</u> variation from the stimulus (model) response pattern. The presence of their peers would fundamentally alter the one-to-many relationship and create several models and centers of attention. (The use of small groups has been discussed above in this study.)

As peers, the advanced students would benefit from a closer relationship with students, possibly more understanding of them

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and certainly more rapport. Even mistakes could be used--for a second-year student might catch a mistake in his advanced peer's grammar and feel a certain pride in correcting it. Such competition would be of obvious benefit to both groups. Generally, however, just as the advanced students would gain self-confidence by comparison, the second-year students would have a chance to see what is possible at the college level--hopefully increasing incentive. It is too easy for a second-year student to see a native model or a highly accomplished model and dismiss them as possibilities of achievement. This would not be so true of peers.

How, then, could advanced students be utilized by the teacher of second-year language? The varieties of interaction are almost limitless. Obviously the advanced students could be utilized in an entirely traditional way: Asked to give a report on some aspect of the foreign literature or civilization, he/she could serve as simply another model or source of information. Since many advanced students have studied or travelled abroad, they could be a great source of stories about the foreign country and tips for the others who (since they are studying the language) would presumably wish to travel there. Such first hand experiences and advice would, we believe, be invaluable and welcome. For variety, several advanced students could join in the presentation of a skit (or, if video materials are available, a film strip). The chance to see a peer group perform (hopefully well and undoubtedly comically) would certainly enhance the pleasure of the classroom experience.

Since team teaching constitutes a valuable alternative to the traditional set-up, advanced students could be developed to do limited amounts of team-teaching with the regular language teacher.

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Probably the most effective use of Advanced Language Students would be derived from a system of Big Language Brothers and Sisters. If there were close to an even number of Advanced Language and second-year students, each advanced language student could be given the same specific responsibility with regard to a student or students in the second year (e.g. pronunciation, certain grammar points or discussion of a particular text.)

Such work outside the classroom might include assignments, discussions or field trips, and might include preparation of ethnic meals. Of course, a space, such as a language house, would be ideal for such meetings and cooperation. Another alternative might include collaboration between an Advanced Language Student and a second-year student on a project to be presented to the other students.

All of this implies, of course, some center of coordination. The Advanced Language Student's interests and teaching preferences (time, methods, etc.,) would have to be screened, developed and communicated to the second-year language teachers. Some forum for the discussion of these techniques and experiences as well as a pool for sources would be needed. A course in pedagogical methodology (properly offered by the Education Department) might be too restricted or restrictive for such a situation.

It occurs to us that the ideal locus of such a group would be the Advanced Conversation course--itself in need of some new impetus and direction. Meeting several times a week, the Advanced Language Students registered in the Advanced Conversation course would bring to the course a new life and certainly have a new motivation to cover the traditional content. Usually a forum

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for a presentation and discussion of the civilization of the foreign country, the course could keep its Young Teacher up to date on current events in the foreign countries as well as allow for that all-important exchange of ideas and experiences on teaching second-year language.

We believe that there would evolve a vital new dynamic in these Advanced Conversation courses which would radically transform the traditional interchanges between teachers and students and among students themselves. Suddenly all would be conscious of the problems and joys of teaching and all would be contributing actively both in the Advanced Conversation group and outside to the improvement of language teaching. (Significantly, too, such a course would be a means of insuring not only coordination, but college credit for the undergraduates willing to engage in such a new and challenging project.)

In conclusion, then, utilization of Advanced Language Students in second-year courses would not only upgrade the quality and improve the motivation of the second-year students, it would excite, challenge, and provide early teacher training for a hitherto unexploited source of talent while simultaneously revitalizing at least one advanced course in the department. Such a technique is surely to be added to the redevelopment of the second-year language course.

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VIII. ORIENTATION AND TRAINING OF NEW TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES AT SUNY/B

The lack of proper preorientation for incoming teaching assistants in foreign languages has always been a serious problem at SUNY/B. The fact that new TA's typically arrive on campus only two or three days before beginning their teaching has always forced our orientation programs to be little more than make-shift cram sessions crowded in between apartment hunting, registration, graduate advisement, textbook purchasing, and other hectic start-of-year activities. While it is true that most TA's are required to enroll during their first semester of graduate work in a graduate-level course in Applied Linguistics, many of the insights gained and techniques learned come too late to be of use to them during those first crucial weeks of teaching. It is further painfully true that formal supervision of our first-year teaching assistants is not always as close as we might wish and that the guidance received is often not sustained with equal care throughout the academic year.

To remedy this situation, a number of possible solutions are proposed, any one of which should be implemented beginning with the coming academic year.

Option No. 1: a short (five-day) orientation period immediately preceding fall registration, to be required of all new TA's accepting a teaching contract in our respective departments. Such a requirement would provide only minimal time for orientation (even supposing an intensive daily program of from 6-8 hours), but would minimize for the TA's the disruption of their summer plans and the burden of additional living expenses in Buffalo.

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Option No. 2: Persuading the School of Education to offer a graduate Methodology of Language Teaching (6-7 weeks) during the regular third summer session, followed up by a 3-4 day orientation offered by each foreign language department separately. The advantage of this option is, of course, that the students would be taking, for graduate credit, a regularly scheduled summer session course not requiring any staff on the part of the foreign language departments themselves until the individual course supervisors get together with the TA's in September to instruct them in the use of the specific course materials chosen. However, to require all new TA's to spend half the summer here in Buffalo may work considerable financial and personal hardship on them, and their stipends might have to be raised accordingly.

Option No. 3: A three-week intensive course in Applied Linguistics--4 graduate credits--a basic introduction to contrastive linguistics--English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese--together with the psychology of second language learning and TFL methodology, followed by the usual separate 3-4 day individual workshops conducted by the supervisors in each language. The advantage of this would be to avoid duplication of staff and the excessive burden on the new TA's time and pocketbook involved in Option 2, yet provide time for a coordinated program, under the direction of a specialist, complete with audio-visual components and classroom demonstrations.

(Such an intensive course might be offered during the three weeks immediately preceding fall registration, and since this innovative course would clearly qualify for support from the Awards Committee on Teaching Innovation, the award ($2000) could

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be used in its entirety to help defray the living expenses of TA's from out of town.)

Regardless of which of the above options is chosen, we recommend in addition that the ongoing training of TA's features, throughout the academic year, weekly informal get-togethers between all TA's (new and old) and course supervisors (or specialists in Applied Linguistics) for the purpose of discussing grammar and teaching methodology in the light of every-day classroom experience.

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IX. FOREIGN LANGUAGE HOUSES:

As so many of the preceeding arguments implicitly or explicitly suggest, the space in which language classes are conducted is of great importance. Bachelard (in Poetics of Space) reminds us how important space is as a function of history--and particularly in early childhood development. If we compare language acquisition in college to early language acquisition, we can understand how important the language learning environment can be. We know, too, the language is to a great extent a function of culture; the greater the simulation of the foreign culture, the easier the acquisition of the language. Experiments in Boston high schools using "acculturated" classrooms proved highly successful.

We believe, then, that Language Houses could be a valuable instrument in the immediate teaching environment.

Equally important, however, is the extra-classroom learning and exposure to language that must take place if languages are to be acquired quickly and well. A good language house (e.g. at Oberlin College) functions as a socio-cultural center, where, from activities ranging from informal daily discussions at meals and elsewhere between faculty or native informants and students of all levels, to planned and publicized, more structured, events, insight is gained into various aspects of the foreign language, life, and thought.

As a program dormitory, the Foreign Language House would undoubtedly be able (as again the Oberlin example has shown) to rely on the talents, good will and availability of nearly all the foreign language speaking faculty whose attendance at meals

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on a regular basis would provide profitable faculty-student interchange and increased exposure to the foreign Language and culture. Foreign language speaking friends of U.B. would offer yet another group of welcome visitors to the House, from whose presence, students would profit enormously. Other cultural activities encouraged by such a milieu might include short slide presentations on the geography and life of the foreign country and other foreign language speaking countries; group theater parties; lectures and discussions specifically designed to prepare those students participating in the various Junior Year Abroad Programs; discussions on foreign language "argot" and foreign language and dialect outside the boundaries of the foreign country; demonstration-participation sessions in foreign folkdancing and folksinging; small concerts and recitals of foreign language music; language games (such as foreign language "scrabble"); celebration of various holidays when appropriate; films when funds permit, Wednesday evening "soirees" (study-breaks) on a regular basis with food and programming prepared by volunteer students. Small projects, such as hand-made posters with foreign language themes (proverbs, etc.), would provide an improvised contribution to the general ambiance of the House.

In short, the Foreign Language House would be a little foreign country in which students of all levels could speed up their language acquisition simply by the conditions of "total immersion" which would automatically operate there.

Hopefully, the space could include a number of classrooms for foreign language courses, and these could be so decorated and arranged as to further facilitate language study by means of

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cultural "props." (Obviously the present system of rotating many classes through the same impersonal classroom is prejudicial against foreign language courses.)

To insure the constant use of the foreign language in the Foreign Language Houses, native informants could be hired as Directors. The Directors' very presence as a linguistic model would be invaluable; he/she could also coordinate the various activities of the center. Since foreign language departments often receive exchange graduate assistants, these could be lodged at the Foreign Language House in return for a certain number of hours of presence and active discussion with students.

The Foreign Language House would naturally house a library of foreign language books and especially foreign language periodicals of immediate interest to foreign language students.

In short, the Foreign Language House would be an enormously important addition to the program of teaching foreign languages at all levels.

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X. ALTERNATIVE CAREERS:

It is easily established through interviews, surveys and statistics that the majority of students who take first-year foreign language courses do not intend it as a means through which they will inevitably be drawn to literature. A foreign language skill is, rather, an instrument of multiple use, the first of which is personal enrichment through a necessarily expanded cultural horizen, whether it be through reading, working, traveling, or social encounters made possible only by the language acquisition. Whereas university students of some years ago had an automatic application for foreign language study in their scholarly preparation for the humanities, the contemporary scene allows students to use foreign language in the immediacy of work contexts which spill beyond arts and letters. A shrinking world due to accessible travel facilities permits an ever-increasing number of young students to enhance their academic interests with personal experience in foreign countries. These modern day citizens know that national boundaries can be bridged only through language acquisition. Air travel has brought all countries closer together and international exchange is booming in all areas. Accordingly, foreign language has filtered into the sciences, politics, and businesses of all types. As a result, foreign language departments of schools must accomodate a broader range of interests in their students. Courses must be geared to serve the needs of non-academic as well as academic careers. Interdisciplinary studies are a reality which must be enlarged to encompass the demands of enlarged activities in a geographically smaller world. Several schools have recently emphasized the

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necessity of career preparation through an interdisciplinary plan of study. Programs vary, but they basically call for a cooperative effort which brings single academic departments out of isolation one with the other. Their resources are pooled in order to extend to the needs of changing curricula. This need to work together on a common problem promotes flexibility within the single departments and permits a more complete program for the student.

The student, on the other hand, should become aware of employment opportunities of a non-academic nature with an interdisciplinary preparation. For example, "the greatest number of overseas workers is in Latin America. There is and will be a demand for specialists in Spanish and Portuguese as long as attention is focused on the economic, scientific, and social development of the Latin-American countries." (J. Sherif: Handbook of Foreign Language Occupations, p. 16). One need not necessarily think in terms of foreign employment. The Federal Government offers innumerable opportunities for employment in such agencies as the Library of Congress which "uses the greatest number of languages in ordering publications, in exchanging, cataloging and completing searches. . .Romance and Germanic languages are preferred for both professional and sub-professional positions. . . use of a language is needed in more than one-half of the positions in the Library of Congress" (Sherif, p. 17). International marketing developments and economic research programs are administered by the Department of Agriculture. The Department of Commerce hires international economists, and management students The Bureau of the Census hires social science analysts. These examples

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barely hint at the possibilities in government employment. A similar need for students prepared in languages plus another discipline exist in the field of journalism and in large business corporations such as banking, petroleum, or even construction companies. The student must become aware of these employment opportunities. The teaching staff of language and literature departments must then utilize their own skills in a more malleable manner. The faculty of any given department composes a broad range of personal interests. Often the individuals of the teaching staff have special areas of knowledge which cannot be employed in the present literature course parameters. Many teachers have had work experience beyond the classroom set-up. For example, a teacher who has an avid interest in history gives limited vent to it in a course on 19th-century poetry. Another who knows shorthand does not use it at all. Yet another who is keenly interested, personally, in media studies cannot apply his knowledge to a Renaissance course in literature. Environment touches everyone. A professor recently returned from abroad can supplement the knowledge of the Environmental Studies student with the parallel problems that exist in a foreign country. Such examples of extra-literary skills among the faculty of language and literature departments are not fiction. An interdisciplinary program (comparable to our suggestion for mini-courses) would, then, revitalize marginal interests and skills of the teaching staff. The student, on the other hand, would have the advantage of tailoring a program to suit his career needs, but one which does not fit into a single department. His greater autonomy that comes of drawing from skills of more than

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one department enhances an individual approach to studies. He is neither coddled nor restricted through identification with one department. He would have the added advantage of an apprenticeship abroad in two or more countries which accomodate his specific interests. Intensive language programs would allow him to acquire his language skill in the first two years of study. Once a student has mastered thoroughly one foreign language, yet another language comes with much greater facility due to the grammatical understanding on a comparative basis of the bi-lingual student. The third language could, then, be acquired on a self-taught basis. After obtaining the basic grammatical knowledge of a language, the individual department would amplify the practical use of the language through courses in the individual language-literature department. It is these courses which are given in the foreign language but concern specialized material of an interdisciplinary nature that such departments as the sciences, business management, etc. cannot offer their students, and make, therefore, a cooperative effort among departments so attractive. For example, a conversation course in the German department would devote some of its time to contemporary politics in East and West Germany for the Political Science major who is specializing in International Government, and planning to work in the Foreign Service. A Journalism student would be offered a conversation course centered around Media Studies. There are innumerable creative writers in Italian literature who could be studied in terms of their journalistic contributions. A media-oriented student could be offered studies in French film. The possibilities of setting up specialty interest courses are infinite. The modern day world has

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undreamed career possibilities for the student who prepares himself to cross cultural boundaries.

We have attempted to outline in the next two pages some possible modifications of curriculum which might lead toward alternative careers.

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Suggestion to supplement present programs in language and literature:

I. Ingredients:

1) Mastery of two languages (in addition to English)
   a) Both languages may be begun at UB
   b) Second language may be self-taught
   c) Prior language training will proportionally increase flexibility of projected program
   d) Concentration in speaking, writing, and translation

2) A specialty in:
   a) Management
   b) Law
   c) Media Studies
   d) Environmental Studies
   e) Journalism

or f) Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, History, etc.

II. Matching possibilities:

Courses offered in Non-Lang. Specialty	Courses offered in Languages
A) Specialty in Law	a) Training in legal languages b) Legal systems of (e.g.) France, Germany, Canada, Francophone Africa c) Legal situation of Writers d) Literature and the Law
B) Specialty in Management	a) Business and Banking language b) Commercial Life and language c) Marxist writers and theory d) Business in literature e) The Book as a Commercial Product
C) Specialty in Media	a) Film studies (e.g. in France) b) News Media (e.g. Russia, Spain) c) Journalism (foreign press) d) Journalism in literature
D) Specialty in Lib. Science	a) . . . . .

III. Apprenticeships:

A) Students would be expected to study in countries of 2 languages and do apprenticeships there (one semester each) in their specialty (e.g. law, management, banking, media, etc.)

B) Upon return to UB, students would do part-time (volunteer?) work for credit in area concern of specialty using languages and specialty.

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IV. Possible program (assumes no previous training in language or non-language specialty):

Freshman:

First Language Intensive	16 hrs	(equiv. of 2 yrs)
General Social Science Background	16 hrs	

Sophomore:

2nd Language Intensive	16 hrs	(self-taught)
1st Lang. Civ. and Translation	8 hrs	
Primary non-lang. specialty	8 hrs	

Junior:

Two semesters of study in countries of specialization.
Includes Apprenticeships in non-language specialty and courses in non-language specialty.

Senior:

1st & 2nd Langs; Civ. & non-lang. specialty options	12 hrs
Non-lang. Specialty courses	20 hrs
Part-time apprenticeship in non-lang. specialty using langs.	--